home is next to you

# Home Is Next To You by Brown Eyes Parker

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**Summary:** El wiggled her foot while she watched the highway signs pass by her from the passenger seat. Two more exits, that's all that was keeping her from seeing Mike again. A sort of restless impatience had been sprouting up in her ever since Joyce had informed her they were going back to Hawkins and not just for a weekend visit. OR El is impatient to get home to Mike.

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El wiggled her foot while she watched the highway signs pass by her from the passenger seat. *Two* more exits, that's all that was keeping her from seeing Mike again. A sort of restless impatience had been sprouting up in her ever since Joyce had informed her they were going back to Hawkins and not just for a weekend visit. They were going to stay for *good*, a development that had occurred because Hopper had been resurrected from the dead and El rightfully belonged with him.

Joyce hadn't said why she was going back too, but El suspected it had something to do with the longing looks her adopted parents had given each other on the plane back to Indiana from Russia.

"We're almost there," Joyce told her, sensing her antsiness. "Just a couple more miles and we'll finally be home."

"One more exit," El said, her heart skipping a beat as she reached for her cup and took a swallow of flat Coke just to give herself something to do.

Finally, Joyce flipped on her turn signal and pulled off the highway.

When they stopped at a red light, El couldn't take it anymore. Her excitement was at a fever pitch. She whipped off her seatbelt and opened the moving van door, jumping out before Joyce could tell her to stop. The cold hit her almost immediately and she remembered, belatedly, she had forgotten to put on her coat. But it was too late to do anything about it, if she went back to get it, she would probably have to get back into the vehicle.

Her resolve strengthened, she started to run down the snowy street as fast as she could. She had only been to the Wheeler's house a few times but she remembered the way just as well ass she remembered the way to Hopper's cabin in the woods.

She glanced over her shoulder to see if Joyce was following her and

then picked up her speed to steal a few precious moments with Mike before being delivered to her dad and having to abide by the summertime rules again.

She didn't stop even though she could feel a stitch beginning to grow in her side and her lungs start to burn. Every second counted and she couldn't waste them on something like *breathing*.

"El!" she heard somebody shout, breaking her concentration.

Afraid she'd been caught, she tried to run faster, if she pretended she didn't hear Joyce yelling for her then she wouldn't have to stop.

"*EL!"*

She came to a screeching halt as she collided with somebody. *"Sorry!"* she gasped, not having much of a choice but to finally gulp for breath since she was finally standing still.

"El, didn't you hear me calling for you?"

El felt like she had the wind knocked out of her all over again when she finally realized she had quite literally run into *Mike*. She shook her head, her breath coming out in white puffs. "Thought it was Joyce," she said, inhaling deeply. "Wanted to see you."

"I know. She stopped at a payphone and called Will to have him tell me that you were on your way over," Mike told her, laughing at the look on her face. He stopped short, "Hey, you aren't wearing a coat!"

"I'm fine!" El insisted as he shrugged out of his, starting to shiver violently as soon as she said it.

"You're freezing!" Mike objected as he started to zip her up.

"What are you going to do?" El protested. "You're going to be cold too!"

"I'm fine, I swear! Besides, you know we're not going to be able to be out here for long anyway. Mrs. Byers will probably come to pick you up soon."

El ignored him and stripped off his coat. "Put it back on!" she demanded, giving him the sternest look she could muster.

Mike considered arguing for a second and then did as was told. A few seconds later, she tucked her arms around him, borrowing some of his warmth.

"That works," Mike said, smiling at her and sighing deeply as he encircled his arms around her and pulled her close, shutting his eyes. "I'm so happy you're home. Sometimes, I thought today would never get here, the time have been dragging out since Mrs. Byers and The Chief decided you were going to come back even though we talked every day, including yesterday."

El huffed. "I *know*! The drive lasted *forever*!" she informed him even though it had only really been four hours, including a stop to use the bathroom and get burgers.

"I didn't even think I'd get to see you today," Mike told her.

"I wasn't going to let *that* happen," El said, giggling. "I was going to make sure I saw you whether my dad liked it or not."

"He's probably sick of seeing me by now. I've been helping him with the house so it would be ready for when you got here. Well, except for your room. Mrs. Byers thought you might want to do that yourself. I'm sorry I didn't tell you before, I wanted it to be a surprise."

El shook her head. "It's fine. I'm just thankful you two are getting along.

"We still have to keep the door open three inches. It was a non-negotiable when he gave me permission to continue dating you. I told him my loving you was non-negotiable. I think he respects me now."

El was about to reply when Joyce pulled up and jumped out of the car, tossing El's coat at them. "I hate to break up the party you two, but I don't want Hop to send out a SWAT team if we don't show up soon. We're already late as it is. Do you want to come and have dinner with us? I asked your mom and she said it would be okay."

"Mrs. Byers, I would love to join you guys for dinner," Mike answered as he helped El into her coat after she had untangled herself from his arms.

El smiled when he took her hand right away.

It was good to be home.

**The End**

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**Author's Note:**
**This is where I had the middle of the story in my head but I had no idea how I would end it. I hope I didn't blow it too majorly and that you will tell me what you thought. I'm thinking about expanding this into a series. BUT I am not making any promises. We'll see where my muse takes me.**

**For the full effect of this story, listen to "With Love" by Rachel Portman. It's what inspired me to write it in the first place.**

**Until Next Time!**
**Love,**
**Holly**